

Registration Suggestions for Prelude/Postlude Music by Don Cook

Careful selection and proper performance of music can greatly enhance the spirit of worship. . . . Quiet prelude and postlude music creates an atmosphere of worship that invites the Spirit into Church meetings. The organist or pianist usually plays hymns or other appropriate music for five to ten minutes before and after a meeting.

--Music section of the *Church Handbook of Instructions*, p. 289

To build a stop combination for a prelude or postlude that accomplishes the purposes described above, **first identify these important characteristics in the music.** If these are not indicated in the score, make the decision yourself:

1. **MOOD:** Meditative or jubilant? Use more words that describe the mood or sound more precisely (light or heavy, clear or rich, sparkling or foundational, simple, calm, reverent, ethereal, solid, majestic, quietly jubilant, etc.)
2. **VOLUME:** Overall volume level (very soft, soft, medium, etc.)
3. **SOLO:** Will a solo and an accompaniment be played on two separate manuals (solo and accompaniment registration), or will both hands play on the same manual (chorus registration)?

Next, decide on the sound that you want and find it on the organ.

CHORUS REGISTRATION

For “chorus-type” registration, in which both hands play on the same manual, try the combinations given below. Use the handout “Common Stop Names Listed by Pipe Category and Family of Organ Tone” to find particular flutes, principals, strings, reeds, or hybrids (as indicated below) on your organ. The following list begins with the softer stops or combinations, which are usually most effective in enhancing the spirit of worship:

1. a soft 8’ stop alone (flute, hybrid, or string)
2. the celeste effect (use two 8’ stops [hybrid, flute, or string, with celeste], or a single celeste stop marked “II” [like Gemshorn Celeste II 8’])
3. two soft 8’ stops (flute and hybrid, flute and string)
4. flutes 8’ and 4’
5. two soft 8’ stops and flute 4’
6. flutes 8’, 4’, and 2’ (or flute 8’, principal 4’, and flute 2’)
7. principal 8’ alone
8. principal 8’ and flute 4’, or flute 8’ and principal 4’
9. principals 8’ and 4’
10. principal 8’ plus no. 1, 3, 4, 5, or 6 above
11. principals 8’ and 4’ plus no. 1, 3, 4, 5, or 6 above
12. principals 8’, 4’, and 2’ (note the brightness of the 2’ principal)
13. Adding the chorus mixtures and/or chorus reeds probably reach beyond an appropriate volume level for preludes and most postludes in Sacrament meeting.

SOLO AND ACCOMPANIMENT REGISTRATION

For “solo and accompaniment” registration, one hand (usually the right) plays the solo part *on either the Swell or the Great*, and the other hand (usually the left) plays the accompaniment on the remaining manual. First, decide whether the sound of the solo or the accompaniment is most important to you, and begin building that combination. Next, build the other combination, balancing it with the first. For the accompaniment (usually played by the left hand), use one of the chorus-type registrations given above.

For the solo part (usually played by the right hand), you need only find a more prominent (louder) stop or combination. *The solo may be registered with any chorus-type registration (see above), as long as the accompaniment is softer.* Celeste effects, however, are usually most effective in the accompaniment part. The following is a list of solo stops or combinations that are not included in the chorus registrations given above. These usually result in a more colorful solo:

1. a single harmonic flute 8'
2. flutes 8' and 2' (a “gap” combination)
3. combinations of the 8' flute and other stops from the Cornet (pronounced “cor-NAY”):
 - a. flutes 8' and 2 2/3' (an especially effective soft solo combination)
 - b. flutes 8', 4', and 2 2/3'
 - c. flutes 8', 2 2/3', and 1 3/5' (“Sesquialtera”)
 - d. flutes 8', 4', 2 2/3', and 1 3/5'
 - e. flutes 8', 4', 2 2/3', 2', and 1 3/5' (the full Cornet)
4. string 8' (may sound like a soft reed)
5. flute 4'
6. soft reed 8' (Oboe, Cromorne, Clarinet, French horn, English horn, Schalmei)
7. soft reed 8' “rounded out” with other mild 8' and 4' stops (flutes, hybrids, strings)
8. all the 8' stops on the Great that blend, possibly including the Swell to Great coupler (a very warm, “singing” solo combination)
9. a larger chorus reed 8' (Trompette, Fagott) (more effective as a meditative solo stop when played in the tenor range)
10. a larger chorus reed 8' “rounded out” with other 8' and 4' stops

PEDAL BALANCE

Build the bass part to balance with the chorus-type combination (not the solo). Choose a soft 16' and 8' stop from the Pedal division (Subbass, Bourdon, Gedackt, Lieblich Gedackt). As an alternative, select a soft 16' Pedal stop and Swell to Pedal or Great to Pedal (whichever does *not* have the solo). To balance larger manual combinations, add larger 16' stops followed by 8' stops in the Pedal as needed. If manual-to-pedal couplers are used, the 8' balance will occur automatically as manual stops are added.

Write down the combination or save it to memory for later use.

Once you have selected the combination that you want, write down the stops in pencil on the music. You can then draw this combination by hand whenever you play that piece on that organ—if you have time. If you will not have time to draw the stops by hand, set the combination on a combination piston (“preset”) as described in Lesson 1 under the combination action. Be sure to double-check your preset just before the meeting!